

**Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Wednesday, November 21, 2012**

Note from Acting Commissioner Abbott

1. [Commissioner Gist](#) ends medical leave, returns full time to RIDE

From the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE)

Race to the Top:

2. Race to the Top [Steering Committee](#) to meet on Tuesday

Data Systems

3. RIDE to launch new data systems for [educator certification](#), assignments

From other organizations

4. Rhode Island Association of Chinese Americans announces [scholarship opportunity](#)

Action Item Calendar

December 7: [Nonpublic-textbook reimbursement](#) form due

Note from Acting Commissioner Abbott

1. Commissioner Gist ends medical leave, returns full time to RIDE

We are sending our weekly Field Memo on Wednesday this week to get ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. All of us at RIDE wish you, your team members, and your students a wonderful and peaceful holiday celebration with family and friends.

As you may be aware, Commissioner Gist has been transitioning back to her full-time schedule at RIDE, and as of next Monday (November 26) she will formally end her medical leave. We at RIDE are deeply thankful for the Commissioner's rapid and full recovery from her surgery and we are glad and grateful to have her back among us to lead the way toward transforming education in our state. This will be my last Field Memo to you as Acting Commissioner, and I do want to thank everyone who dedicates themselves to the continuous improvement of public education for their commitment and hard work.

For me, it has been a pleasure to be able to take some time to visit your schools, to participate in ceremonies for educator recognition (such as the Teacher of the Year, the Milken, and the Golden Apple Awards), and to meet with you and the leadership of RISSA to discuss the many issues and challenges before us. I appreciate the work you do every day to ensure that we spend taxpayer dollars wisely, that we have great teachers in every classroom, that teachers have the support and resources they need, and that we are

preparing all students for success. I know that we share the goal of making our schools America's best. In my role as Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel, I will continue to work in partnership with you to help lead us toward that goal.

From RIDE

Race to the Top

2. Race to the Top Steering Committee to meet on Tuesday

Thanks to all LEAs for participating in the quarter-one Collaborative Learning for Outcomes (CLO) meetings. You shared many promising practices within your groups and provided RIDE with essential feedback on how to shape the quarter-two CLO meetings and other remaining meetings for this year. Your feedback indicates that you are finding the CLO meetings valuable, and our team is dedicated to continuing to provide a meeting structure that encourages productive, helpful conversations among LEA leadership teams.

We want to let you know that the next quarterly Race to the Top Steering Committee meeting is coming up **Tuesday** (November 27), from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., at the Rhode Island Foundation, 1 Union Station, Providence). This meeting will feature a panel discussion with Rhode Island educators on the beginning-teacher induction program. The meeting is open to the public.

Data Systems

3. RIDE to launch new data systems for educator certification, assignments

Our office of Educator Quality and Certification would like to notify LEAs and educators about the launch of eCert and the Personnel Data Collection.

The eCert (Educator Certification) system design is almost complete. The eCert system will replace the existing RICert system and will be launched in January. The new system will allow educators to update contact information, view certifications held, print certificates, and apply for renewals.

The Personnel Data Collection (PDC) will replace the existing Personnel Assignment Process (PAP) and will be launched in January. This system will allow human-resource specialists to submit required personnel data for educators working in their LEAs. These data are required for federal and state reporting.

Detailed information about these new systems will be forthcoming in the coming weeks.

From other organizations

4. Rhode Island Association of Chinese Americans announces scholarship opportunity

Please see this notice from the Rhode Island Association of Chinese Americans:

It is our great pleasure to announce the immediate availability of a new scholarship offered by Rhode Island Association of Chinese Americans (RIACA) to high-school senior students applying for college. We

would like to ask your help to disseminate this news to the high schools in your district.

The name of the scholarship is *RIACA Scholarship*. The goal of this scholarship is to promote academic excellence and understanding of Chinese culture and Chinese heritage among youth. This scholarship will be awarded to a few high-school graduates who show excellence in academic records, community service, and contributions to local community. In particular, priority is given to students who show great interest in Chinese culture and heritage and provide service to the local Chinese community. Up to \$3,000 will be awarded to each RIACA Scholarship recipient in the spring of 2013 through a competitive application process. We expect this scholarship to continue years after 2013 if successful. More details can be found on the website www.RIACA.us.

If you have any questions regarding the scholarship, please feel free to contact us at scholarship@riaca.us.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>